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Mayor

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City Intensifies Use of Nurse Home Visitation Services to Target Health of Pregnant Women and Babies

Mayor Barrett and Commissioner Baker launch Nurse-Family Partnership program to improve birth outcomes in Milwaukee and program now accepting referrals

Mayor Tom Barrett and Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker announced today the launch of a new City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) program designed to improve birth outcomes for low-income woman. Any low-income woman who is pregnant with her first child and is less than 28 week (7 months) pregnant is eligible providing she lives in one of the following zip codes: 53204, 53210, 53212, or 53218.

Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) is an evidence-based national nurse home visitation program that improves the health, well-being and self-sufficiency of low-income, first-time parents and their children by establishing long-term relationships between public health nurses and families. Highly trained, registered nurses begin services early in pregnancy and continue providing support to the mother and child through the child's second year, working with mother to:

- Have a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby.
- Become a better parent.
- Build a strong network of support for her and her baby.
- Make the home a safe place for the baby to live and play.
- Obtain referrals for healthcare, childcare, job training and other support services available in the community.
- Find ways to continue her education and develop job skills.
- Set goals for her family's future and find ways to help her reach them.
- Encourage the woman's partner, extended family, and friends to participate in the home visits when appropriate.

"This is a targeted approach to promoting early childhood health interventions," said Mayor Tom Barrett. "I'm very proud that Milwaukee was chosen to be an NFP site because this is a proven cost-effective investment in the well-being of children and families."

Milwaukee is the most recent city to implement the NFP model to address healthy birth outcomes and will join other metropolitan cities such as New York City and Los Angeles. NFP is currently serving families in

more than 280 counties in 22 states across the nation. The NFP program in Milwaukee is comprised of five Public Health Nurses and a Nurse Supervisor all of whom have recently completed standardized training by the NFP National Service Office in Denver.

The latest infant mortality figures show that within the four target zip codes that NFP will serve, there is a disproportionate percentage of infants deaths in our city. In 2006 these 4 zips contained only 28.6% of all births in the city, but had 34.5% of the infant deaths. In 2006, the infant mortality rate among non-Hispanic Blacks was 18.04 per 1,000 compared to a non-Hispanic White rate of 7.23 per 1,000. “Reducing the infant mortality disparity gap in Milwaukee continues to be a top priority for the department,” said Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker. “We are committed to the proven success of the Nurse Family Partnership Model in Milwaukee to help address this critical health issue.”

In published, peer-reviewed trials, the NFP intervention has shown improved birth outcomes and long-term health in the children of at-risk mothers. Measurable outcomes during the two and a half-year intervention are expected to include decreased rates of smoking, drinking and other drug use during pregnancy; decreased rates of preterm and low birth weight deliveries; longer intervals between subsequent births, and decreased rates of childhood injury. Both the Washington State Institute for Public Policy and the RAND Corporation have identified Nurse-Family Partnership as one of the most cost-effective programs of its kind, returning over \$17,000 in public funds for every family served.

The RAND study also identified the following economic savings:

- Increased tax revenues from increased employment and earnings by program participants including state and federal taxes, Social Security contributions and state and local sales taxes.
- Decreased Welfare including Medicaid, Food Stamps, Aid to Families with Dependent Children and general assistance by counties.
- Reduced Expenditures for Education, Health and Other Services including special education, emergency room visits and homeless shelters
- Lower Criminal Justice System Costs including arrest, adjudication and incarceration expenses.

“As a national organization poised for expansion, we embrace organizations like the City of Milwaukee Health Department, which has displayed an extraordinary level of commitment and perseverance in adding Nurse-Family Partnership to its continuum of services aimed at improving the lives of families,” said Thomas R. Jenkins, Jr., President & CEO of the NFP National Service Office. “We are proud to partner with them as we all embark on providing services for the first time to families in Wisconsin, and hope that this provides a catalyst for future growth throughout the state.”

Earlier this year, grant funding was secured for the research and implementation of the NFP program. Columbia St. Mary’s awarded the MHD a \$990,000 3-year grant and a \$449,000 3-year grant by Wisconsin Partnership Program.

For more programmatic information visit our website at www.milwaukee.gov/health or call 414-286-6637.

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